

REMARKS

The Office Action of May 5, 2008 has been reviewed and its contents carefully noted. Reconsideration of this case, as amended, is earnestly requested. Claims 1-4 were cancelled previously. Claims 5-11 are pending in the application, claim 11 being amended by this amendment. More particularly, claim 11 is amended to overcome the indefiniteness rejection. The amendment of claim 11 is supported by the original claims and throughout the application; no new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 112

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. More particularly, claim 11 stands rejected as lacking an antecedent basis for the limitation "the stainless threads".

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is overcome by the present amendment of claim 11. More particularly, claim 11 now has the proper antecedent basis. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection of claim 11 are therefore respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC § 102

Claims 5-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kanamori (JP 2000-170222A). More particularly, the Examiner maintains that Kanamori discloses a water service box comprising a case (8a) having a built-in flexible hose (22a, the portion inserts into a corrugated tube (23)) connecting a soft tube (the upper portion outside the corrugated tube (23)) with a water tap (12) and a valve plate (8b), wherein one end of the flexible hose connects and fastens with the soft tube protected by the corrugated tube (23) through a reducing socket (25b), and the other end of the flexible hose connects and fastens with the water tap (12), a friction projection (the surface of the valve plate 8b is considered the friction projection) and a socket insertion hole (8n) formed on the valve plate, and having a rim member (see 8n) around the socket insertion hose. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection, to the extent that it is understood.

Applicant's independent claim 5 recites a wall-concealed water service box, comprising a case that has a built-in flexible hose connecting a soft tube with a water tap and a valve plate. Referring to Figures 1 and 2 of Applicant's specification, the water service box (1) comprises a case (2) having a built-in flexible hose (9) connecting a soft tube (34) with a water tap (33) and a valve plate (12). Specification at paragraph [0018], Figs. 1 and 2. The soft tube (34) is a hot or cold water pipe guided from the outside. Specification at paragraph [0032]. It may be verified in the figures that the water service box (1) comprises a case (2) that has a built-in flexible hose (9) and a valve plate (12) that opens and closes. Specification at paragraph [0020], Figs. 1 and 2. That is, valve plate (12) is a means to close or open the case (2). Specification at paragraph [0024]. The invention thus provides a unified, wall-concealed water service box, having an integrated (*i.e.*, built-in) flexible hose for connecting soft hot and/or cold water pipes and the water tap, so as to allow the service box to be opened and closed, without disturbing the pipe connections, thereby unifying, rather than merely housing the connections. Further, with its built-in tubing, the water service box of the invention can be easily assembled and disassembled, and its internal situation can be checked directly by placing a hand through its maintenance hole, so that it will be easy to determine the situation, to retrofit and maintain, and be effective to finish the work neatly with an access plate. Specification at paragraph [0016].

Kanamori discloses a plumbing structure for liquid-supply pipes, whereby ingress of rainwater to inside the outer walls can be prevented, while providing a passage hole in the outer walls of buildings. The liquid-supply box (8) of Kanamori is composed of a box main body (8a) and a cover (8b). In addition, the box main body (8a) is composed of a main body member (8c) that houses the joint (9), a sheath tube attachment member (8d) into which the sheath tube (5) inserts, and a stopper (8e) that stops the inserted sheath tube (5). Specification at paragraph 0022.

The Examiner maintains that the plumbing structure of Kanamori includes a built-in flexible hose (22a, the portion inserts into a corrugated tube (23)) connecting a soft tube (the upper portion outside the corrugated tube (23)) with a water tap (12) and a valve plate (8b), wherein one end of the flexible hose connects and fastens with the soft tube protected by the corrugated tube (23) through a reducing socket (25b), and the other end of the flexible hose connects and fastens with the water tap (12). However, the Examiner's assertion is incorrect,

because, in fact, **Kanamori does not disclose a built-in flexible hose connecting a soft tube with a water tap and a valve plate**, as explained in further detail below. Indeed, the built-in flexible hose as recited in Applicant's claims is conspicuously missing from Kanamori. That is, the liquid supply pipe (6 or 22) of Kanamori cannot simultaneously be both the built-in flexible hose (9) and the soft tube (34) to which it is connected, as recited in Applicant's claims and described in the specification. Rather, the structure to which the Examiner refers as a built-in flexible hose is actually the liquid supply pipe (6 in the cited reference), which corresponds to the soft hot and/or cold water pipe (34 in Applicant's specification). Thus, clearly there is only one tubing member disclosed in the cited reference, whereas Applicant's claim 5 recites two separate tubing members, one being the built-in flexible hose (9) and the other being the soft hot and/or cold water pipes (34). Further, the liquid supply pipe (6 or 22) of Kanamori is not built-in as an integral part of the plumbing structure. Furthermore, the elbow (12) of Kanamori is not a water tap, rather it is merely an elbow, having no means for controlling the flow of liquid, as a water tap normally would have. Thus, the water tap also is absent from the cited reference.

In summary, the liquid supply pipe of Kanamori (6 or 22 in the cited reference) corresponds to the soft hot and/or cold water pipe (34 in Applicant's specification), and the sheath tube (5 or 23 in cited reference) corresponds to the corrugated tube of Applicant's specification. Thus, the plumbing structure of Kanamori clearly does not have a built-in hose, or anything built-in for connecting a soft tube with a water tap and valve plate. More particularly, the liquid supply pipe (6 or 22 in the cited reference) of Kanamori is not built-in, *i.e.*, it is not an integral part of a unified field service box. Thus, the box of Kanamori merely serves as a housing for field-constructed connections. There is no built-in hose included in the box disclosed in the cited reference, and the pipes housed therein cannot be serviced without disturbing their connections. Nor does Kanamori disclose a water tap and valve plate, as recited in the instant claims and described in the specification. More particularly, the elbow (12) of Kanamori is not a water tap, and the cover (8b) is not a valve plate that can be opened and closed. Therefore, Kanamori does not disclose each and every limitation of Applicant's claim 5.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection of independent claim 5 as being anticipated by Kanamori is thus overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of claim 5 are therefore respectfully requested.

Dependent claim 6, being dependent upon and further limiting claim 5, should be allowable for the same reasons, as well as for the additional limitations recited therein. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of claims 5-6 are therefore respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC § 103

Claims 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Kanamori (JP 2000-170222A) in view of Kanazuki (JP408033160A).

Applicant respectfully disagrees, and believes the claims are patentable over Kanamori and Kanazuki, individually and in combination, for the reasons given above in respect to the section 102 rejection of claim 5 (and 6), from which claims 7-10 depend. The argument above as to the novelty of claims 5-6 is thus repeated here by reference.

Kanazuki does not cure the deficiencies of Kanamori. Rather, the combination of Kanamori and Kanazuki would merely result in the plumbing structure of Kanamori having an access plate. However, this does not correspond to Applicant's claimed invention, as there is no built-in hose disclosed in either reference.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is thus overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of claims 7-10 are therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Kanamori (JP 2000-170222A) in view of Kanazuki (JP408033160A) and further in view of Mulvey *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,106,027).

Applicant respectfully disagrees, and believes the claims are patentable over Kanamori, Kanazuki and Mulvey *et al.*, individually and in combination, for the reasons given above in respect to the section 102 rejection of claim 5 (and 6), from which claims 7-10 depend. The argument above as to the novelty of claims 5-6 is thus repeated here by reference. Mulvey *et al.* clearly does not cure the deficiencies of Kanamori and Kanazuki, as there is no built-in hose disclosed in any of the cited references.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is thus overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of claim 11 are therefore respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes the claims are patentable over the prior art, and that this case is in condition for allowance of all claims therein. Such action is thus respectfully requested. If the Examiner disagrees, or believes for any other reason that direct contact with Applicant's attorney would advance the prosecution of the case to finality, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

"Recognizing that Internet communications are not secured, I hereby authorize the PTO to communicate with me concerning any subject matter of this application by electronic mail. I understand that a copy of these communications will be made of record in the application file."

Respectfully submitted,
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